Fellowship in Prayer

"For a world united in prayer"

O God, if I worship Thee in fear of hell,
Burn me in hell.
And if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise,
Exclude me from Paradise.
But if I worship Thee for Thine own sake,
Withhold not Thine everlasting Beauty.

Volume X April, 1959 Number 2

OUR PURPOSE

To promote the practice of prayer among *all* religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

22 E. 29th Street New York 16, N.Y.

Volume X April, 1959 Number 2

Let This Day Be Holy

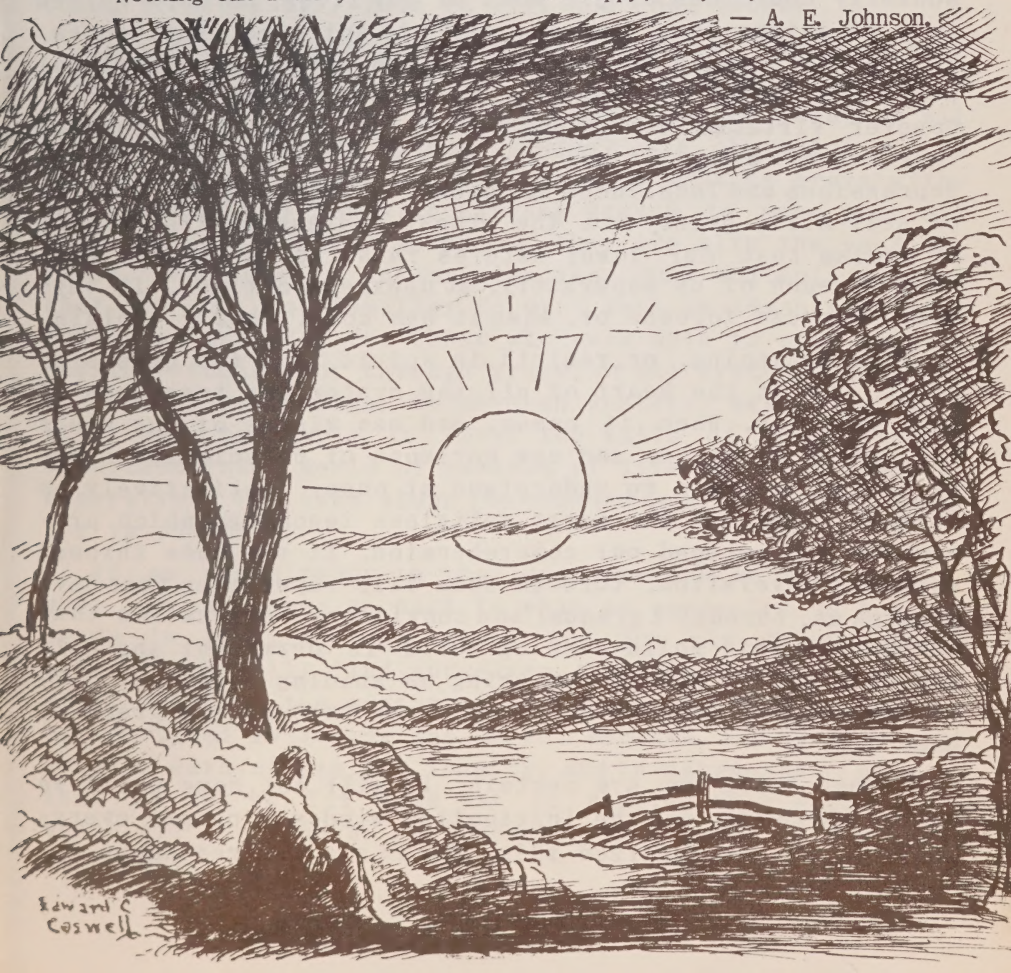
Let this day be holy
Though rough be the road,
May every tribulation
Prime the grace of God.

Let this day be happy,
Come you out for joy -
Love's perennial blossom
Nothing can destroy.

Let this day be builded
Into a house of prayer
Whereto the troubled spirit
May instantly repair—

A star-suspended chapel
Of thankfulness and praise,
Musical with memories
Of happy, holy days.

— A. E. Johnson.



SPRING....REFLECTIONS ON REBIRTH

Winter is more than a season, it is a state of mind; and most of us are happy to see it go. April comes, and it is as though we have our life back again. This is the great time of renewal and rebirth through all nature, and we, as parts of that nature, share in the resurgence of energy and strong joy flowing through all earthly things.

But as people dedicated to religious principles, and bound by prayer to a common purpose, Spring should remind us that rebirth of *spirit* is the heritage that all the great religious teachers have left us. In our natural condition we are like the world of winter—ice-bound, locked up in ourselves, waiting, sleeping. Even if we have been ethical, socially conscious people most of our lives, perhaps raised in a religious home, exposed early to spiritual influences, we are still among the unawakened and once-born. Spiritual awakening cannot be achieved by any of these influences, however virtuous or strengthening. It must come through long travail of spirit and struggle with ourselves, through depressions and loneliness and doubt, through all the agonies of self-will, pride, and the almost endless manifestations of egoism that our lower natures raise up in us. It must come to each of us separately, at unexpected times, in ways none of us can foresee or, when it has come, wholly explain.

This awakening, or rebirth in spirit, and the necessity of it, is at the heart of all the mysterious teachings of high religion. When it comes, and new vistas of our souls are opened up to us, and new horizons of consciousness experienced, we begin to understand at once, instinctively as it were, many of the great religious teachings which previously had escaped our comprehension. It may come through a sudden revelation, through some life-experience that devastates us, through a gradual and convincing realization that nothing in this solid-seeming world is permanent and only the life of the spirit can bring us abiding peace and certainty; or, we are told, it may come through the grace of God.

Of one thing we are certain: it will not come until we are ready for it, and the instinctive wisdom of people everywhere has always realized this. For it places tremendous de-

mands on us. The strange, new knowledge it vouchsafes us, the avenues of hope and longing it stretches out before our vision, the power it imbues into us, the incentives it raises, and the bliss and peace it begins to pour into our lives—all of these are not granted without laying upon us a great responsibility to live up to these gifts and, one day, to make ourselves fit to receive Truth and enter the kingdom of heaven.

If we are still weak; if we still doubt; if we still have too-urgent attachments to the things of the world, clinging to private habits we have built up over the "once-born" years, it will not come to us. Or if in our hearts we cannot honestly say, even if only once, but mean it in utter sincerity, that for God we would be willing to give up everything if necessary, then it will not come either.

Consider the admonition of St. Paul to "pray without ceasing." Which of us, in the state we all know before the spirit has stirred and awakened in us, can do this? In all honesty what person, however ethical his character may be in its natural condition, will declare that he prays without ceasing? It seems an extreme demand to make upon our ordinary natures, afflicted as they are with the vacillations, weaknesses, inconsistencies, and multiple desires that are all too familiar to us. Such an admonition must have been intended for those who *were* able to pray without ceasing—those who, through grace, or the mystery of faith, or through revelation, or through whatever means to start with, have been able to break the walls of their natural condition into a world of newness of life and spiritual regeneration. For them alone the command to pray without ceasing is possible.

If we are already in that company—and we will be forever, we can never go back to what we were—let us bow our heads in gratitude and thank God for his "unspeakable gift." If we still find ourselves "natural" men and women, still bound to the winter of our lives, for whom the Spring of spiritual awakening has not yet arrived, let us pray with greater earnestness and longing, and in nakedness of spirit, that we may be fit some day to receive that gift before which all the honors, excitements, and riches of the world fade away.

THE REVELATION OF THE RISEN CHRIST

AN EASTER MESSAGE

By W. J. Thompson, D.D.

In the Gospel of John, Chapter 20, we read: "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early unto the sepulchre." And in the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 24: "Behold two of them went that same day to Emmaus." In these beautiful stories of the appearance of the Risen Christ, first to Mary Magdalene, and then to Cleopas and his companion on the way to Emmaus, we note two points of similarity, and one point of significant difference.

First: The Risen Lord revealed Himself to humble individuals. Mary was a woman of Magdala, a person of lowly position; and the two disciples on the way to Emmaus were so obscure that the name of one of them had been forgotten. One name only, that of Cleopas, is given in the account by Luke. They were just humble followers of Jesus. These first appearances of the Risen Christ reveal our Lord's love for ordinary persons. This teaches us that the Saviour values the humblest soul.

Not to the high and mighty,
But to those in lowly place
Came Christ on that first Easter
And revealed His shining face.

If you consider yourself just an ordinary sort of individual, let this Easter message encourage you, for our Lord first showed Himself to those who occupied lowly positions.

The second point of likeness between these two appearances of the Risen Redeemer is found in the fact that both revelations were given to those in trouble. Mary stood by the tomb of Jesus weeping bitterly; and the two men walking to Emmaus were sad and discouraged. In each case there was need of comfort, and the fact that Christ appeared to them first teaches us that He sympathizes with the sorrowing everywhere.

One asks:

"What can it mean? Is it aught to Him
That my nights are long, and days are dim?
Can He be touched with the grief I bear?...."

Sorrow never seeks the Risen Lord in vain. He is nearest when most needed. Definite desire for Him leads to discovery of His saving Presence. If you are in trouble, turn to the Risen Redeemer and you will find He can change

grief to gladness, and turn sorrow into song.

I have mentioned two points of similarity in these Easter stories—one, the Risen Lord first appeared to humble individuals; two, both revelations were given to those in trouble. In conclusion, observe the striking differences between the sorrow of Mary Magdalene and the sadness of the two men, traveling to Emmaus. Mary's trouble was emotional—she was grieving over the loss of her dearest friend; the trouble of the two men was intellectual. They were perplexed by the loss of a great hope. They said, "We trusted that He should have redeemed Israel."

It was the empty grave that troubled Mary; but it was the crucifixion on Calvary that confused the two men. Mary was broken in heart, but the two disciples were perplexed in mind. Please note the exquisite appropriateness of Christ's response in each case. To Mary, broken hearted for her Lord, Jesus uttered just one word - her own name - spoken as only He could say it, proving beyond all doubt that He was indeed alive. But to the two men walking to Emmaus, puzzled by the problem of His crucifixion, "He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." In the case of Mary, He comforted the heart, and in dealing with the two disciples He enlightened the mind.

In these first appearances of the Risen Master, we have a revelation of His unfailing ability to give the right spiritual response to the individual's special need.

THE HAND OF GOD

O, the lonely road I trod,
The empty days I knew,
'Til I found the Hand of God
Extended to me, too.

— *Carl Helm.*

O grave, where is thy victory?

— St. Paul.

GETHSEMANE AND FAITH

By Rev. Samuel H. Miller

How accustomed we have become to all the incidents of life of Jesus our Lord! How easy it is to pass these by as if they were merely murals on the wall! They no longer shock us or cause us to catch our breath in sudden recognition of pain. They have become ecclesiastical accessories, useful for all sorts of clever homiletical experiments. It is possible now to go through the story of the ordeal of Gethsemane without coming near the anguish and heartsickness of Jesus. Yet the overtones are there, if we will linger long enough to hear them.

He said to his disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful. Wait here and watch with me." He went a little farther and fell on his face and prayed, saying, "Oh, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." And he turned back to the disciples and found them asleep and he said to them, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" He went away again and prayed, saying, "Oh, my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." And he came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy, and he left them and went away and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. A simple story but heart-shaking!

Surely one ought never to get the idea that this kind of experience is foreign to the religious man. Whenever one hears people speaking glibly to those who are suffering, saying, "Don't worry, everything is all right," one has the feeling that the man who keeps his mouth shut in spiritual modesty is much nearer Jesus than the addle-brained sentimentalist who wants to whistle himself and everybody else into a state of euphoria. Gethsemane and the cross of Jesus Christ stand as living witnesses against that kind of superficiality which parades itself as if it were religious just because, ostrich like, it blindly refuses to look at the tragedy and heartsickness that stand at the center of life and cry aloud from every cross of the world, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

This is part of religion; to deny it denies the very heart and soul of our humanity and also, strangely enough, of our faith in God. If all things are so patently right and proper, then there is no

deep, fundamental need for faith. We need only smack a smile on our faces and keep grinning.

It seems to me that the first characteristic of religion...is that its eyes are open, wide open, to every tragic situation of the world. It never hoodwinks itself in trying to believe things about the world that are not so. It looks at the cross and by no kind of abracadabra does it cancel it out of existence and say it is unreal. It admits it, carries it, and tries somehow to enter into its meaning. Certainly the heart of a religious man must be honest. There is no escape from Gethsemane or Calvary. There is no escape from the tragic nature of life itself. As Goethe said, no one knows life until they discover it is tragic. If it is not tragic, then there is no truth to the Bible itself or to the Christian faith, which assumes there is a need for salvation in such life. The Bible and salvation lose their relevance...in any other view of things...

I heard a man not long ago say that he had reached the point in his faith where he held almost in contempt men who had any doubt or uncertainty about God and Christianity. I cannot quite understand what he could have meant. Is there a human soul who stands deeply in the midst of life itself in all of its anguish...in all its uncertainties and confusion...in all the catastrophes and tragedies that happen, who does not have heart-shaking doubts, so that like Jesus he would sweat drops of blood in some Gethsemane of his own and perchance in some darkness of his soul cry out, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Not to understand this is fundamentally not to understand the Bible...

Let us turn again to Jesus and the story of Gethsemane... There is essential mystery here, not merely confusion... If anything is indicated undeniably in this experience of Jesus, it is not to sidestep the problem, but to wrestle with it. Do not expect and do not accept an easy answer...Stand where the disciples stood, near the Garden of Gethsemane, and in silence see a man who would not sidestep; who would not call a bad thing good, who would not try to take the easy way through, who pled with God that if the cup could pass from him, let it pass, who was honest of heart and sincere of emotion, and in this respect was fit to be the Savior of men who are caught in the same dark spot...

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THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING

By Rev. Roy Wallace Thomas

Goethe said, "Christianity is at heart the worship of an infinite sorrow." That is morbid. Christianity is not the worship of a sorrow but of a Healer, the Great Physician, who seeks to remove the causes of pain and sorrow and cure the sufferer by making him whole.

The prodigal in Jesus' parable found nothing but misery at the end of his sinful adventure. He knew that in his case he had brought pain upon himself. But a vast amount of human suffering is inflicted by the vicissitudes of nature or by others, or comes from ignorance and from unknown causes, in spite of one's good intentions.

Undeserved suffering is hard to explain. An interne in a hospital, who became a great novelist, saw an innocent child die horribly of meningitis. It made a scar upon his soul that time never erased. Repeatedly he asked, "Is God good?" How explain evil? This is the Gordian knot of the world's wisest men. Perhaps in the present state of our knowledge there is no adequate explanation of evil.

But if we cannot explain evil, neither can we escape it. Evil is a fact that confronts us at every turn of our way. It does not help to deny it. A philosopher wrote, "It is no more possible to think well of evil than to think ill of good." It does not help to call white black and black white. Evil is a fact. Goodness is a fact.

It may help to note that while moral evil is not necessary, it is contingent upon the good. Wrote a wise man: "Virtue is the choice of the right when we can choose the wrong. Virtue is not possible in a world in which sin is not also possible, because virtue is choosing to do the right when one is free to do the wrong." Moral evil is an abuse of freedom A robot can have no virtue, no goodness. Virtue and goodness lie in choice. We can choose the good. This we can do in a world of pain, whether deserved or undeserved.

What would God do if He were one of us in this world of evil? We know what he would do because of the light given us in the gospel of Jesus. God is in our world struggling against evil. In his own attitude, Jesus revealed the attitude of God. Jesus did not try to give a theoretical ex-

planation of the problem of evil. He dealt with it as a practical man of religion. *Jesus did something about evil.*

But he never became soiled in the conflict. He did not return evil for evil. He practiced the formula later given by Paul: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Kindness and intelligence were Jesus' weapons in overcoming evil. Kindness is love in action.

Frederick Myers, asked what he would say if given an opportunity to ask one question of the Sphinx, replied, "I would ask whether the power back of the universe is friendly or not." Jesus faced the total universe with faith and perfect adjustment and found Heart at the center of it, in spite of evil. Jesus was positive that God is good, and he called the Ground of the universe "Our Father." He found the Father a never-failing Friend despite the terror of the cross.

Jesus knew what lay before him long before the event. He knew, because of the kind of world in which he found himself, that he could not openly preach and teach what God is like, and denounce the evil doings of men, without suffering martyrdom. His experience of daily tragedy and his intimation of final tragedy certain to come, because of the divine way in which he did something about evil, caused in him a deep sadness like incurable pain.

What shall a man do when sentenced to incurable pain? Shall he give way to despair, surrender to bitterness, curse God and die? Jesus demonstrated in his experience that suffering may be used to attain a joy few can know without painful struggle. He ran the entire gamut of disappointment and pain. The author of Hebrews (2: 10) tells that Jesus was made "perfect through suffering."

In our world there is no motion without resistance, no progress without struggle and conflict. There is no moment when goodness is unopposed. The quality of life is determined by the nature of the goal of effort. The cross is the symbol of inevitable struggle and also of *possible victory*.

The cross of Christ means that in our struggle God suffers, resists and overcomes *with us*. We are never alone. There is no goodness, no victory without moral effort. The victory comes through glorious teamwork of man with God. Jesus' struggle in the garden was real. Victory in his most agonizing crisis came when he succeeded in placing his will completely in the care and under

the direction of God's will.

The gospel of Jesus offers a way to triumph in the midst of the most desperate situation. A preacher learned that a young parishioner had suffered a delicate operation on her eyes. He found her in the hospital with her eyes bandaged. The surgeon had exhausted the best medical skill, but did not know whether the operation would prove successful. "Pray for me," begged the young woman of her pastor, "that when the bandages are removed, I may see." "No," he replied, "that is not the way to pray. If the operation should prove unsuccessful, you would lose your faith in prayer and in God. Pray for strength to make a pearl out of it should you not see."

Then he told the familiar story of how pearls are made; how the oyster, when unable to expel an irritating ingredient, covers it with mother of pearl and creates a marvel of beauty. He stood beside her on the day when the bandages were removed. The darkness remained. She put her hand in his and bravely said, "I will make a pearl of it." In her own calvary she found triumph by praying as Jesus prayed.

Jesus' thrice-made prayer in Gethsemane for God to remove the cup of pain was unanswered. Yet God gave him strength so that next day on Calvary he made a pearl of it.

Do unto others
As though
You
Were the others.

— *Elbert Hubbard.*

THE ANSWER TO YOUR PRAYERS

By Rabbi Edward E. Klein

Like Elijah of old, we are assailed today by the winds of pagan doctrine which break in pieces our most precious hopes. But that doctrine is not of the Lord. Like the prophet, we feel the very foundations on which we rest, quaking; civilization facing destruction. But God is not in the earthquake. Like him, we see the fires of fanaticism consume men and institutions. But God is not in the fire.

God is not in the rumbling of guns in Korea, God is not in the roaring invective at the United Nations, God is not in the storms of modern living which sweep us from our moorings. "Kol D'momo Dako" — God is in the still small voice that answers prayer, the still small voice that squares our shoulders, motivates and stimulates us to go forth to resist and battle the evils that surround us still.

That's what we mean by prayer power. No magical incantation that moves mountains; no mystical palaver with a magnified man to upset the laws of nature. No miraculous intervention to build a new Eden by fiat. Only this: the quietness and confidence, the courage and earnestness to go forth and do.

Prayer is not to be identified with craven begging. We don't pray to *get* something; we pray to *be* something. We don't pray for material rewards; we pray for spiritual strength, that we may control the material world. We don't make God our servant; we pray to be His partner in the work of creation. Nor, to take the other extreme, do we regard prayer as merely autosuggestion. It is a two-way circuit from man to God, and the answer from God to man. Prayer is communion. Prayer is communication. In prayer we so attune ourselves to the source of Life, that the very breath of new life is breathed into our souls. To use the figure of speech of the philosopher, William James, we are "bays open to the great tides of life." Or to quote Emerson, "Prayer opens windows of the soul" to the sunlight of God's love. In prayer we do not seek to make God act; but rather we seek to understand His purpose.

And prayer works. In this age of anxiety each of us needs the strength of ten, the strength to rise above the tensions, and the strength to build a better world. Prayer is our adjustment to the great Power of the universe. It is a pipeline to the Fountain of Living Waters. Man prays for power to the Source of Power, and the answer comes when God pours His life into our own. There comes an access of inner power that equips us to face day-to-day problems, the crises of life, life itself, with fortitude, with courage and dedication. There comes the still small voice as it came to Elijah, inspiring us to reconstruct our way of life, to build and rebuild society. There comes the faith that fills the mind, quickens the heart and strengthens the hand to do justice.

THE WORDS OF RAMAKRISHNA

(The following selection is presented to our readers in the belief that the philosophy underlying it is of tremendous importance in the modern world. Ramakrishna (1836-1886) is widely regarded as the foremost spiritual figure India has produced in centuries.)

You see many stars at night in the sky but find them not when the sun rises; can you say that there are no stars in the heaven of day? So, O man! because you behold not God in the days of your ignorance, say not that there is no God.

As one can ascend to the top of a house by means of a ladder or a bamboo or a staircase or a rope, so divers are the ways and means to approach God, and every religion in the world shows one of these ways.

Different creeds are but different paths to reach the Almighty. Various and different are the ways that lead to the temple of Mother Kali at Calcutta. Similarly, various are the ways that lead to the house of the Lord. Every religion is nothing but one of such paths that lead to God.

I have found that it is the same God toward whom all are directing their steps, though along different paths. You must try all beliefs and traverse all the different ways once. Wherever I look, I see men quarrelling in the name of religion. But they never reflect that He who is called Krishna is also called Siva, and bears the name of the Primal Energy, Jesus and Allah as well—the same Rama with a thousand names. A lake has several ghats. At one the Hindus take water in pitchers and call it 'jal'; at another the Mussalmans take water in leather bags and call it 'pani'. At a third the Christians call it 'water'. Can we imagine that it is not 'jal' but only 'pani' or 'water'? How ridiculous! The substance is one under different names, and everyone is seeking the same substance; only climate, temperament, and name create differences. Let each man follow his own path. If he sincerely and ardently wishes to know God, peace be unto him! He will surely realize Him.

Bow down and worship where others kneel, for where so many have been paying the tribute of adoration the kind Lord must manifest Himself, for He is all mercy.

(Used by permission of the Vedanta Society, New York.)

RAMADAN, ISLAM'S MONTH OF FASTING

This year the sacred month of Ramadan is observed throughout Islam from March 10 to April 9. It was in this month that the prophet Mohammed received his first great revelation and, later, fled from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D., the turning point in history for all Moslems. During Ramadan all able-bodied Moslems are commanded to abstain from food, drink and tobacco from dawn to sunset. (The Koran says that dawn commences when it is light enough "to distinguish a white thread from a black.") This month-long fast has been rigorously adhered to since it was first proclaimed by Mohammed and remains to this day one of the Five Pillars of Islam. (The others are: prayer five times daily; a declaration of belief; almsgiving; and a pilgrimage to Mecca.) Ruth Cranston, in her book WORLD FAITH, says that "Moslems believe a special blessing comes to those who keep vigil with Mohammed and follow his injunctions strictly at this time."

Huston Smith, whose THE RELIGIONS OF MAN we reviewed recently, has this to say:

"Being a month in a lunar calendar, Ramadan rotates around the year. When it falls in the winter its demands are not excessive. When...it falls during the scorching summers, to remain active during the long days without so much as a drop of water is an ordeal.

"Why, then, does the Koran require it? For one thing, fasting makes one think, as every Jew who has watched through the long fasts of Yom Kippur will testify. For another thing, fasting teaches self-discipline; he who can endure its demands will have less difficulty controlling his appetites at other times. Fasting underscores man's dependence upon God. Man, says the Koran, is as frail as the rose petal; nevertheless he assumes airs and pretensions. Fasting reminds him vividly of his essential frailty and dependence. Finally, fasting sensitizes compassion. Only those who have been hungry can know what hunger means. If a man has himself fasted for thirty days within the year he will be apt to listen more carefully the next time he is approached by someone in need."

Everyone receptive to the spiritual truths which other religions can impart may reflect upon the profound wisdom and insight into human nature that inspired Mohammed to set aside such a period of fasting.

T H E

(The following is an excerpt from Dostoevsky's great novel, THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV. We present it as an example of how profound religious insight may be revealed through the medium of fiction... In this scene Mitya Karamazov, on trial for the murder of his father, has just been subjected to a long and brutal cross-examination. Mitya, a simple, impulsive man, innocent of the crime of which he is accused, is bewildered and overwhelmed by the ordeal. He sits in his chair full of weariness, losing contact with the terrible reality that surrounds him...)

He felt more and more oppressed by a strange physical weakness. His eyes were closing with fatigue. The examination of the witnesses was, at last, over. They proceeded to a final revision of the protocol. Mitya got up, moved from his chair by the corner to the curtain, lay down on a large chest covered with a rug, and instantly fell asleep.

He had a strange dream, utterly out of keeping with the place and time.

He was driving somewhere in the steppes, where he had been stationed long ago, and a peasant was driving him in a cart with a pair of horses, through snow and sleet. He was cold, it was early in November, and the snow was falling in big, wet flakes that melted as soon as they touched the earth...Not far off was a village, he could see the black huts, and half the huts were burnt down, with only the charred beams sticking up. As they drove in, there were peasant women drawn up along the road, a lot of women, a whole row, all thin and wan, with their faces a sort of brownish color—especially one woman at the edge, tall and bony, who looked forty but might have been twenty, with a long, thin face. And in her arms was a little baby, crying. And her breasts seemed so dried up that there was not a drop of milk in them. And the child cried and cried, and held out its little bare arms, with its little fists blue from cold.

"Why are they crying, why are they crying?" Mitya asked, as they dashed gaily by.

"It's the babe," answered the driver. "The babe's weeping."

And Mitya was struck by his saying, in his peasant way, "the babe," and he liked the peasant calling it a "babe."

S I O N

There seemed more pity in it.

"But why is it weeping?" Mitya persisted stupidly. "Why are its little arms bare? Why don't they wrap it up?"

"The babe's cold. Its clothes are frozen and don't warm it."

"But why is it? Why?" Mitya foolishly persisted.

"Why, they're poor people, burnt out. They've no bread. They're begging because they've no bread."

"No, no." Mitya, as it were, still did not understand. "Tell me why it is these poor mothers stand there. Why are these people poor? Why is the babe poor? Why is the steppe barren? Why don't they hug each other and kiss? Why don't they sing songs of joy? Why are they so dark from black misery? Why don't they feed the babe?"

And he felt, though the questions were unreasonable and senseless, that he wanted to ask just that, and he had to ask it in just that way. And he felt that a passion of pity, such as he had never known before, was rising in his heart, that he wanted to cry, that he wanted to do something for them all, so that the babe should weep no more, so that the dark-faced, dried-up mother should not weep, that no one should shed tears again from that moment, and he wanted to do it all at once, regardless of all obstacles...His heart glowed, and he struggled towards the light, and he longed to live, to live, and to go on and on, towards the new beckoning light, and to hasten, hasten, now, at once.

"What? Where?" he exclaimed, opening his eyes and sitting up on the chest, smiling brightly. Nicolay Parfenovitch was standing over him, suggesting that he should hear the protocol read aloud, and sign it...He was suddenly struck by the fact that there was a pillow under his head that had not been there when he fell asleep, exhausted, on the chest.

"Who put that pillow under my head? Who was so kind?" he cried, with a sort of ecstatic gratitude, and tears in his voice, as though some great kindness had been shown him.

He never found out who the kind man was—perhaps one of the peasant witnesses...but his soul felt tense with the emotion. He went to the table and said he would sign whatever they liked.

"I've had a good dream, gentlemen," he said, in a strange voice, with a new light, as of joy, in his face.

THE QUEST FOR HAPPINESS

By Swami Ritajananda

All of us, whether we are young or old, man or woman, we seek happiness. It is an eternal quest. All our actions are directed towards attaining this. In our childhood toys and dolls give us pleasure. When we grow up a little we try to get pleasure in reading books. When we become young men and women, we seek the company of our lovers. Later on the desire to get money and children comes to the forefront of our thoughts. If these are not there, at least the desire to become famous comes and we feel very elated when our name appears in the newspapers. Fame is the infirmity even of noble minds. Thus we can see how the quest for happiness is there all along and also how it moves from one object to another.

These objects not only are the sources of joy, but also the source of misery, strange as it may seem. They are the forces that compel us to work. It was found centuries ago that happiness alone is the ulterior motive behind our actions. No one will court misery. If an action beings unhappiness, nobody will take it up. The hard working people, the ascetics, who undergo many penances, putting the body and mind to great strain, they have the aim of getting joy when they succeed in their attempts.

Now here is an interesting point to note. All the joy we can get out of this world comes from some object or a person, or something outside of us. So, it has a fluctuating nature. You know the reaction of a child when you snatch the doll from its hands. There have been numerous illustrations that when lovers are frustrated they commit suicide. It is also a known fact that when a person engaged in a big speculative business gets a rude shock, he loses his senses. These sources of joy in the external world, strangely, always have a source of misery very close to them. It may be a person or an object which makes us feel the heights of earthly joy, but when that person leaves us or that object is removed we just collapse. Sometimes it is like a fall from a precipice, shattering us to pieces.

It is also found that these sources of happiness are elusive. In India the oil mills are run by bullocks, which go round and round the mill.

helping the extraction of the oil. The man who has to drive the bullocks takes a bundle of tasteful straw, ties it to a post, and makes it hang a little to the front of the animal, so that it moves along with him. The bullock goes to the front to eat the straw, but the straw also moves. So, the bullock goes round and round, vainly trying to reach it. This is hope. We hope to get a helpful partner in life, we hope our children will grow up as we want, we hope to succeed in life and hope to find happiness in everything. But somehow it does not always happen. We become disappointed. It sometimes happens we could have lived a different life than the life we have been living.

Or we feel that our freedom is curbed and that we are prevented from doing anything we would like to do. We may have the good fortune of being invited to a fine dinner. But how can I enjoy it if my old body cannot digest anything? Even though we can get scientific aids for helping our bodies when they are ill, those aids are flimsy and can at best make us all the more unhappy when we see people who are quite healthy.

Thus it is found that the happiness we can get out of the world depends entirely on objects, that it is of a fluctuating nature, and is always followed by unhappiness and the curtailing of our freedom.

So we shall now try to see whether there is any other sort of happiness, which will not depend upon mundane objects, which will be a permanent one, which will never allow unhappiness to come near, and which will not curtain liberty.

This search was taken up even by the early people, the discoverers of Vedanta, thousands of years ago. They sought joy through the worldly things. Then they found the defects, and some of them who were wise sought happiness of a different type. They stopped praying to gods for increase of wealth, for progeny, for prosperity and success. Some did succeed in their attempts. Some happened to discover that joy was not outside, it is a part of ourselves. An eternal joy in infinite abundance, we have with us. This joy did not depend on any worldly object at all. It was not affected by the changing world. It could not be shaken by any type of calamity. It never touched our freedom.

Then they began to talk about it, composed poems, wrote treatises, and called people to try this new experiment. It was not a joy produced by

any herb or chemical substance, but it was the opening of the source of joy latent in us. It was something that could transform a person completely into a divine personality. It was a type of joy that could radiate and touch all people by its magic power, and remove their misery also. They also discovered that the joy we get from external objects is only the reflected happiness of this inner joy. We feel a particular thing delights us, but when we note it does not delight another person we have to doubt whether that object really has some power to produce joy, and why it should succeed in our case and fail in another's. So, they said, the joy is being projected by you, from inside, and that is how you enjoy it. It is as if we are enjoying the sight of shadows instead of the source.

The inner joy, the inherent bliss in us, is what has to be sought after. It is the supreme bliss. This is the prerogative of all religions. When we transcend the body and get a direct experience of the Reality, we find that we are entering a region of bliss which is millions of times superior to all our earthly joys.

Further, we have seen that there is a fear of losing the joy got by worldly things. But in the case of the bliss of this divine realization there is no fear of losing it, since it is not attached to any material object. So, we are told that the man of realization has no fear at any time. He has neither the fear of losing the object that delights him, nor even the fear of his own departure from the world.

Thus we find a realized person gets a sort of freedom which is unique. He is not afraid of anybody or anything from this world or the other. He has a sort of joy unparalleled and eternal. He develops a power by which he can even make his state of blessedness pass on to others. We find this has been the quest of people for ages, particularly those people who have realized this world is not capable of giving the highest type of joy. All the great saints and seers of the world who could go near that Supreme Reality continued to demonstrate the existence of Supreme Happiness and its power on humanity. In the Bhagavad Gita, it is said that a man of steadfast wisdom who can face the world boldly and will not suffer any misery, is one who is established in his own Self. That is, he who understands his real nature is that of Bliss Absolute.

Such people alone will be capable of doing good to humanity. For they have no motive of gain.

If we really feel that happiness is to be attained, and should be of the bliss we have been considering up to now, we should work for it. The Vedanta just lays before us some conclusions with which we may experiment and try to find out the truth for ourselves. This is the true quest for happiness: the Happiness of God Realization. The divine ecstatic joys of the seers from ancient days up to our own are like milestones to guide our struggles.

A PURE HEART

By Harry Halsey Starrett

A pure heart is man's only passport into the Kingdom of Heaven.

A pure heart is that heart which beats in perfect unison with the great Divine Heart, which embraces and loves all and all alike.

Our hearts become pure only when all carnal things have been washed away by the Love of God, and it is only through unceasing prayer, with perfect faith, that we can keep in constant communion with God, and it is only through constant communion with God that His Love can flow through us without ceasing, dissolving away all which is not of the Spirit and purging us of every last vestige of selfishness, that we may be a pure, perfect channel of His Word, His Love, His Light, His Life, His Understanding, His Wisdom, His Power and His sustaining Grace, illumining, uplifting and helping all who come in our presence.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Heaven doth with us as we with torches do;
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not.

— Shakespeare.

BEYOND DOCTRINES

When we enter the wise Silence in our own soul we come into contact with all the other communing souls and with the One Soul of all. When we enter and abide in the Silence we stand upon that ground which is common to all who know and enjoy GOD, no matter what their religious beliefs or doctrinal views may be. On this common ground I meet in perfect fellowship, soul touching soul, those who would not own me outwardly, and who, but for the love of Christ in them, would denounce me as a dangerous heretic. This is why I always refuse to argue about, or discuss, doctrine or theology.

If we can all meet in the Wise Silence and enjoy communion and fellowship with God, in spite of serious and widely diverging differences in doctrinal belief, then doctrinal and theological differences cannot be of such supreme importance as many people imagine. If so, then they are really unnecessary to one who can enter the Silence. They may be necessary to some, but such should on no account quarrel, argue or dispute about doctrines and theologies, but each should accept that which suits him personally. If it makes him happier to believe in a certain theory of things—things which are infinitely above and beyond man's intellect—then let him believe in it; but let him not quarrel or argue with or condemn his neighbor because he believes in a different theory. No theory of things spiritual can ever be really correct because spiritual things can only be spiritually discerned. They can never be understood or realized through or by the intellect, but only through actual direct knowing by the soul. They can never be stated in words: they defy definition and explanation.

Doctrine, theology and creeds no doubt have their uses. They act as a sheet anchor to those who otherwise might wander into error. Unfortunately, however, many people have substituted them for TRUTH, and think that they are of supreme importance.

— Henry Thomas Hamblin.

(Mr. Hamblin, who died last October, was a British writer on spiritual themes. The above is part of a longer essay called THE WISE SILENCE.)

" ...God is himself the Being of all beings; and we are as Gods in him, through whom he revealeth himself... His Spirit goes forth from him and meets all those that seek him. Their seeking is his seeking, in which he desireth humanity; for humanity is his image, which he has created according to his whole being and wherein he will see and know himself. Yea, he dwells in man, why then are we men so long a-seeking? Let us but seek to know ourselves, and when we find ourselves we find all."

— Jacob Boehme.

Lord of the flowering moment,
Instruct my spirit how,
In Life's soon over summer,
To reap the here and now.

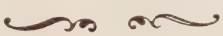
— A. E. Johnson.

"The plain fact is that Jesus taught no theology whatever. His teaching is entirely spiritual or metaphysical. Historical Christianity, unfortunately, has largely concerned itself with theological and doctrinal questions which, strange to say, have no part whatever in the Gospel teaching. It will startle many good people to learn that all the doctrines and theologies of the churches are human inventions built up by their authors out of their own mentalities, and foisted upon the Bible from the outside; but such is the case. *There is absolutely no system of theology or doctrine to be found in the Bible; it simply is not there."*

— From THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, By Emmet Fox, published by Harper & Brothers.

Let a wise man blow off the impurities of himself, as a smith blows off the impurities of silver, one by one, little by little, and from moment to moment.

— Buddha.



Book Review

THE GREAT RELIGIOUS LEADERS, by Charles Francis Potter; Simon & Schuster, 1958, 493 pp; $7.50.

Charles Francis Potter is a well-known, talented, and sometimes controversial writer in the religious field. He has recently gained attention by his studies of the Dead Sea Scrolls. His present book, THE GREAT RELIGIOUS LEADERS, is a revised and enlarged edition of THE STORY OF RELIGION. It is a big, wide-ranging, colorfully written, highly quotable work. Some of his definitions are excellent in their scope and precision, of which three sentences in the introduction may serve as examples:

"*Religion* is the endeavor of divided and incomplete human personality to attain unity and completion...*Religions* are systems of belief and practice which arise among the disciples of some man who has attained a satisfying measure of success in his endeavors to unify and complete his personality.

"Since, then, every religion begins as some individual's personal religious experience interpreted to and reproduced in others, the story of religion can best be told in the lives of the world's religious leaders, setting forth how the faiths they founded were reflections of their own souls' conflicts and harmonies."

After this auspicious beginning, however, the reader comes to know very little of these conflicts and harmonies. The book is as full of the author's opinions and prejudices as of his chosen subject matter. ("There is much in Buddha's teachings," he says, "which is not in line with Western thought.") It should interest and divert those readers who wish to know something about the great religious leaders, but not enough to disturb their preconceptions about them.

This observation is suggested by Dr. Potter's own prevailing attitude throughout his book. His extensive contact with the lives and teachings of great prophets seems to have caused little or no modification in what is essentially a humanist approach to life. There are more than a dozen specific references to humanism in his book, and a humanist philosophy pervades it. Yet of all the faiths that might be offered modern man in his present condition, the humanist faith has least to offer; and a study of great religious leaders, of all sub-

jects, would be served less effectively from a humanist standpoint than from any other.

Colin Wilson, the brilliant young British author, calls humanism "spiritual laziness" and reminds us that it is already dead as a vital force in the modern world. Of Bertrand Russell, an apostle of humanism in our time, he writes: "Russell has always fostered the innocent belief that one can talk one's way to the depths of the universe." This is what humanists are still trying to do, in a world whose imperative need is spiritual regeneration and religious insight; and it is the recurrent motif in Dr. Potter's book.

Humanism, though discredited as a serious contribution to man in his present predicament, appeals to that part of us that would ignore the demands of high religion and "talk our way" to Truth; that likes to think that prophets and saints were special people who lived long ago and are not necessary in today's sense-dominated world. Consequently THE GREAT RELIGIOUS LEADERS may find numerous readers who, in inadvertent moments, will allow themselves to think as Dr. Potter, more often than not, does himself.

The author, reflecting the gospel of humanism, would reduce the experience of God-consciousness and divine illumination in the great prophets to pathological trances, the result of abnormal and eccentric tendencies in their minds. Whether deliberately or not, he tries in effect to disparage the miraculous and transcendent wherever possible. Of Christ he says: "When men hereafter bow to him it will not be in homage to a deity but in recognition of a superior craftsman in the art of living." Of St. Paul: "We are all familiar with certain self-made martyrs who glory in their sufferings, and Paul simply had this eccentricity to an exaggerated degree. Consequently, when we are inclined to admire Paul for 'glorying in his infirmities' we must qualify our admiration by recognizing the semi-pathological nature of his state of mind." And of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus: "Whether he saw an actual light or not is hard to tell."

The author's talents seem to lie in other directions. His linguistic gifts, passion for research, and scholarly attainments lead one to believe that his major contribution to knowledge will be his studies of the Dead Sea Scrolls, of which THE LOST YEARS OF JESUS REVEALED has already been published.

Book Review

AWAKENING TO THE GOOD, by Claire Myers Owens; Christopher Pub. House, Boston, 1958; 273 pp; $3.75.

There is an abiding goodness in man, beneath all the incrustations of habit and self-forgetfulness, and an eternal goodness in the universe—this is the conclusion agonizingly reached by Claire Myers Owens in her feverishly written but absorbing book, AWAKENING TO THE GOOD. It recounts, in episodic fashion, the spiritual highlights of her life and sketches out her search for a rational meaning for many remarkable moments of illumination she has experienced. It is marred by a journalistic, melodramatic style ("Texas moonlight," "old mother nature," and such phrases abound in it), and the episodic form she has chosen is unsatisfying; but we can recommend it as an honest and original work. The book has been praised by discerning critics and deserves a wide reading. It will stimulate and often move most readers, for it has the natural, immediate appeal of a genuine personal chronicle.

Mrs. Owens is a born mystic who distrusted her own mystical experiences because the mores and values of her society did not include spiritual illuminations in its way of life. "—I wanted no part of mysticism, thank you, if that was what it really was. Everyday life was quite exciting enough for me." Her Reason was an added deterrent to embracing the truths she had experienced in sudden moments of ecstasy, moments when her individual self was seized up and obliterated in a temporary contact with a greater Self. ("Why are we... moderns," she wrote later, "afraid to listen to the voice of... our own inner nature? We have nothing to lose but our despair.") There was also her early habit of ridiculing many passages in the Bible: "All my life... I had heard the old Biblical cliche, 'He that loses his life shall find it'. I did not believe a word of it."

Finally, she lived unacquainted with the vast literature of mysticism of all religions, the recorded experiences of many spiritually illumined souls through the ages. As a result she imagined that her own ecstatic moments, which enabled her periodically to break through the veil that conceals higher truth from ordinary consciousness, were unique to her: "I dared not

mention this mysterious experience to any living soul."

Hence she failed to explore the world within her, to develop spiritual leanings which, though not as conclusive as she seems to believe herself, were unquestionably genuine. Instead, in the course of time she projected all of her thwarted longings onto the world and inevitably saw chaos, man's inhumanity to man, and hopelessness everywhere.

In 1949 despair, brought on by what she felt was the condition of the world in the 20th century, overwhelmed and nearly destroyed her. "Now I searched not my outward actions but my inner being. No, I could find no inborn good buried even in the remotest corners of myself. None." But it was an emotional and spiritual crisis from which she emerged with the incentive ultimately to regenerate her life. After her recovery she started a long, intensive quest for spiritual understanding and psychological truth. "What, our Reason demands sooner or later, *is* this ecstatic release of our deeper self, this sense of union with some higher power?" Her book itself is evidence that she has achieved a measure of success in this quest.

It is strewn, however, with many astounding statements, due perhaps to the author's lack of detachment from her material. In the recollection of her own spiritual experiences, she alludes to Christ's teaching, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God', and makes the unfortunate remark: "Now that was not quite true." Also, in her admiration of Carl Jung, the psychologist, she says that many "heretofore meaningless" Bible passages "become psychologically credible through Jung." Two such passages that she quotes are the words of Christ.

AWAKENING TO THE GOOD is not a great book nor a really deep one. It is written too hastily to be deep; and her experiences are seen from the inside, as it were, lacking in their description the perspective and calm appraising balance that only great books give us. But its infectious spirit and thoroughgoing honesty make it a very appealing book. (The reader, disarmed by her candor and the desperate earnestness of her search, is carried along in a tide of exuberance.) And its implication that spiritual experiences are the heart and soul of religion, and spiritual truth, fortified by the assent of reason, the final purpose of living, make it an important book.

NOTICES and COMMENTS

PURPOSE RESTATED. We are now in the midst of plans for extending our subscription list. We believe that FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER, though still modest in size, has something important to impart to the lives of many people, something which is not found too easily elsewhere. This was true from the moment of its inception, when the idea of the Fellowship first flashed into the mind of Carl Evans some nine years ago. But it is more true now than ever before.... With this issue many people will be reading FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER for the first or second time. It struck us as a good introductory number for new readers and it should give them a characteristic idea of what they might expect in future issues. This number, it so happens, contains among other features an article by an American Rabbi, one by a Hindu Swami, a cover prayer by a Moslem saint, a short article on the Moslem sacred month of Ramadan, and a selection from the words of Ramakrishna. These special features are a part of our basic purpose in regularly presenting interpretations of non-Christian faiths. The world is steadily growing smaller and peoples everywhere are drawing in ever-closer contact with one another's philosophies. As this process continues, we try to do our part in presenting to our readers the truths of spiritual movements other than Christianity, the faith in which most of us were reared....Newcomers, especially, are urged to write to us and let us know if our current plans to expand our circulation (and, when it is feasible, to increase the size of the magazine) are justified, as we hope they are.

SO. CALIF. NOTE. Readers in the Southern California area who would like to advance the cause of Fellowship in Prayer, and make our work and publication known to greater numbers of people, are invited to get in touch with Mr. Gordon Belding of 136 South Cañon Drive, Beverly Hills, California. During a recent visit to New York Mr. Belding came to our office a number of times and in more ways than we can mention here proved to be a productive and important help to us, particularly from the standpoint of future expansion. People in Southern California who have ideas of their own in this respect, and who likewise feel that FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER is

only at the very beginning of its growth, would do well to communicate with him. Mr. Belding may be regarded as an authorized representative of Fellowship in Prayer in these matters.

CONTRIBUTORS. Rabbi Edward E. Klein, of the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue in New York, has appeared in our pages before, but it has been a long time since we have had the privilege of printing his work. We welcome him back and anticipate publishing more of his cogent articles with fair regularity in the future....Rev. Samuel H. Miller is minister of the Old Cambridge Baptist Church in Cambridge, Mass. and Professor of pastoral theology at the Harvard Divinity School. His latest book, PRAYERS FOR DAILY USE, was published by Harpers in 1957. His talk on "Gethsemane and Faith," from which we have printed an extract, must have been inspiring to hear when it was originally delivered from the pulpit. It is indeed a sobering piece of work and contains, we believe, some extremely important ideas for all serious-thinking religious people, ideas which often tend to be undervalued in our time....As indicated above, the striking lines on the cover were written by a renowned woman saint of Islam, Rabiah, who lived more than a thousand years ago—reminding us that the eternal truths of life and religion are the same yesterday, today and forever....From time to time in the future we shall reprint articles, or parts of articles, written by the late Henry Thomas Hamblin, who is represented in this issue by the page headed "Beyond Doctrines." Mr. Hamblin founded THE SCIENCE OF THOUGHT REVIEW, whose address is Bosham House, Chichester, Sussex, England....Our Contributing Editors have responded with their usual promptness and skill in helping us to prepare this issue, and we extend our thanks and appreciation for their constant support. To everyone else who helped, especially to Mr. Edward C. Caswell for his beautiful and evocative illustration on page 1, we want to express our gratitude.

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER is published bimonthly at 35¢ a copy; the annual subscription rate is still $2.00. Special rates are available for additional copies....One free copy will be sent to any regular subscriber upon request.

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THE GIFTS OF GOD

When God at first made Man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by;
Let us (said He) pour on him all we can:
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way;
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honor, pleasure:
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone, of all His treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

For if I should (said He)
Bestow this jewel also on My creature,
He would adore My gifts instead of Me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature.
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness:
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to My Breast.

— *George Herbert.*

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